

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

May 5, 1967

A-67-18

IN REPLY
REFER TO:

Honorable William F. McKee
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear General McKee:

The Board has become concerned over a series of fatal accidents involving inflight wing structural failures of Beechcraft Model 18 aircraft. In each of these accidents a wing panel folded over the top of the fuselage as a result of a fatigue failure of the wing lower truss member. Three such accidents have occurred since August 1966, with the most recent occurring at Acworth, Georgia, on April 28, 1967. In this latter accident the left wing failed in fatigue at the landing gear cluster on the lower truss member. Airworthiness Directives 64-21-1, 2, and 3, which require X-ray inspection of this very area every 500 hours had just been accomplished on March 17, 1967, disclosing no cracks and attested to by an entry in the aircraft log. The investigation disclosed this aircraft had been flown from 27 to 46 hours after the X-ray inspection had been accomplished.

Since the accident prevention action intended by this Airworthiness Directive did not preclude the occurrence of inflight structural failures in this accident or the accident in August 1966, we believe that there is an urgent need for immediate remedial action to prevent the occurrence of another accident of this type.

Because of our serious concern for the future safe operation of the large number of these aircraft in private, business and air taxi service, the Bureau of Aviation Safety invited the FAA Flight Standards Service staff to attend a meeting to provide an opportunity for a complete interchange of information on this problem. As a result of this meeting, held on May 4, 1967, we believe both staffs now have a complete understanding of the safety implications involved and that the FAA is studying the problem to determine a reasonable and effective remedial action.

The Board urges the Administrator to consider the urgency of the need for immediate corrective action and recommends that the subject aircraft be inspected by radiographic and magnetic particle methods prior

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Honorable William F. McKee (2)

to further flight. Our engineering and investigative staffs are available to provide any further information or assistance in this matter. We will, of course, keep you informed of further developments of our investigations.

Sincerely yours,

/s/Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.

Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.
Chairman